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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2438

Nov. 24, 1989

LA VERNE G. AUSMAN has been nominated by President George Bush to be administrator of USDA's Farmers Home Administration. Ausman would succeed Vance L. Clark. Ausman has been serving as a consultant with USDA's Farmers Home Administration. He was deputy undersecretary for small community and rural development at USDA from 1987-1989; director of intergovernmental affairs at USDA from 1986 to 1987; and secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture for Trade and Consumer Protection from 1981 to 1986. He attended the University of Wisconsin.

WATKINS APPOINTED -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has appointed Birge Swift Watkins as deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services. Watkins has been an assistant to the administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service. A native of Grand Rapids, Mich., Watkins holds a bachelor's degree from Alma College, Alma, Mich., and master's degrees from Harvard and the London Business School.

PRATT NAMED TO HEAD REA -- Sec. Yeutter has appointed George E. Pratt as deputy administrator of USDA's Rural Electrification Administration. For seven years, Pratt was board chairman of an electric distribution cooperative providing service to 25,000 consumers in southern Alabama. He served 20 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, is a graduate of Loyola University, New Orleans, La., and owns and operates a small farm in Foley, Ala., raising cattle, hay and pecans.

WEIGHT LOSS SIMPLE ARITHMETIC -- Why do so many dieters lose the first few pounds with ease and then struggle, often in vain, to lose the rest? Answer: their caloric intake isn't decreasing along with their weight. "If you want to weigh 160 pounds, you have to eat like a 160-pounder," says USDA's William V. Rumpler. That applies year-round, including the coming holidays. Rumpler, a physiologist, says the results of two weight-loss studies don't support the currently popular premise that people's metabolism slows down in response to fewer calories. "Our data show if you continue to reduce calories, you'll continue to lose weight," he says. Contact: William V. Rumpler (301) 344-4360.



V.A. SLASTJONENKO, deputy chairman of the USSR State Committee for Publications, holds an audio cassette of USDA ag radio weekly programming presented by Radio & TV Chief Vic Powell. The Soviet delegation of ag communicators & farm managers toured USDA communications facilities and met with representatives of USDA, Congress and ag organizations. (USDA Photo by Perry Rech.)

YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT, you'd better not cry, you'd better not pout, we're telling you why -- Santa Claus is bringing you a bag full of USDA Television News FEATURES during December. Special holiday features on Christmas trees, the care & feeding of Christmas plants and holiday food safety will run early in the month. The feeds are scheduled the last two weeks in December and will carry more features than usual (more general topics) to help you through the holidays. Contact: Lynn Wyvill (202) 447-4330.

BUT, DON'T LOOK FOR YOUR FBL the last two weeks of December, because we won't publish the Farm Broadcasters Letter Dec. 22 and 29. We'll resume publication with the Jan. 5, 1990, issue.

BIZARRE BEHAVIOR MAY HAVE BEEN RYE FUNGUS -- Bizarre behavior in medieval Europe may have been caused by massive outbreaks of food poisoning from ergot, says Mary Kilbourne Matossian, a historian at the U. of Maryland. Ergot, a highly toxic mold, produces a natural form of the hallucinogen LSD and, under certain climatic conditions, can infect rye. Ergot poisoning was a risk in pre-modern Europe because peasants ate as much as three pounds of rye bread each day. Matossian accounts for outbreaks of bizarre behavior by looking at local food consumption patterns and climatic conditions over the previous growing season. The theories appear in her recent book, "Poisons of the Past: Molds, Epidemics, and History." Contact: Mary Kilbourne Matossian (301) 454-2843.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1694 -- Residents of rural America are faced with increasing isolation as more and more mainstream transportation systems abandon rural areas for more profitable pastures. Maria Bynum examines the problem and what's being done about it. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1176 -- Check-out alert; improving rural transportation; surviving holiday parties; hosting holiday parties; getting the fat out of holiday meals. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1683 -- Non-program crops on conservation acres; Thailand export opportunities; U.S. rice stocks; preventing ground water contamination. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1247 -- "Bugged" bugs in the attic; byproduct roach bait; anti-roach vents; anti-cancer strawberries; boosting ellagic acid. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., Nov. 28, Outlook conference coverage begins with items on trade outlook, trade policy, farm policy & the farm bill; also 1990 projections for farmers; Wed., Nov. 29, Outlook coverage including outlook for grains, oilseeds & livestock; Thurs., Nov. 30, ag prices plus outlook stories on global climate change, farm environmental concerns & farm sector economics; Mon., Dec. 4, world ag outlook; Tues., Dec. 5, crop/weather update; Wed., Dec. 6, horticultural exports.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (Nov. 23, 25 & 30) FEATURES, ACTUALITIES & AG UPDATE.

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on the scientist of the year awards; Brian Norris has the story on cattle auction via satellite TV; Lisa Telder reports on the shortage of veterinarians; Gary Beaumont has a story on four new soybean varieties from the University of Illinois; and Joe Courson looks into the future of tractors.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on soil moisture; USDA Economist Leland Southard on meat production & exports.

AG UPDATE -- Randy Weber tells about alternative non-program crops; Janise Zygmunt on the wool & mohair program; and the tree assistance program.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Small U.S. food companies meet large export success; farming bottomland at odds with water quality; hazardous trash; rural road safety; organic farming.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 12D

OFFMIKE

FIRST...week of December will be a busy time for Sherry Newell (WJON/WWJO, St. Cloud, Minn.) Several state organizations are conducting meetings that week, promising to keep her and the farm department jumping. Dry fall prevented crops from producing maximum yields, and the region enters winter moisture deficient. Says she's heard long-range forecasts that go in both directions regarding relief. Sherry begins another year as editor of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters' (NAFB) newsletter, "CHATS."

IRRIGATION... district had to borrow water from other areas to finish the season, says Howard Hale (KNEB, Scottsbluff, Neb.). Shortage in local reservoirs made it a difficult year for producers in western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming. There was enthusiasm in Howard's voice when he spoke about the recently concluded NAFB convention. Says he believes the organization is on an upswing with a rededication to promoting farm broadcasting.

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CORN...harvest was good, says Joe Jarvis (WCVL, Crawfordsville, Ind.) with most producers getting 180 to 200 bushels an acre. Bean harvest, however, was another matter with yields not as high as expected. Machinery sales have improved in Joe's area, and he says if producers have another good year replacing equipment will be high on the agenda. Says he knows of three combine fires this year, the result of old equipment running on bare essentials.

CONGRATULATIONS...to Ed Slusarczyk (Ag Radio Network, Utica, N.Y.) for the Outstanding Alumni Award from Cornell University citing his work in education & agriculture.

WHAT...we need is a real good soaker, says Jim Kendrick (KWT0, Springfield, Mo.). Haven't had any rain in the last 30 days and the outlook is not optimistic. But cattle and hog prices are holding well and most producers are ending the year in good shape. Amen.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vic Powell".

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division